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TAGS: PREL OPRC KIRC KPAO EC

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: BOLIVIA; QUITO

¶1. "Latin American Trend," an editorial (12/20) in Guayaquil's (and Ecuador's) leading center-right "El Universo" (circ. 140,000)

Quote: "Ten years ago, Bolivia was showcased by the IMF and the World Bank as the model, the recommended recipe from the Washington Consensus. the Bolivians radically transformed their economy, adapting it to the neo-liberal model. The experiment worked. but only for a while.

"Now let's return to the present. We don't know how Bolivia's immediate future will unfold. We wish her the best. But her example corroborates for us that while the region has finally abandoned the free market model, it doesn't yet know in which direction to go, and considers at times proposals whose value is not yet known."

¶2. "The Bolivian Surprise," an editorial (12/20) in Quito's leading center-right "El Comercio" (circ. 70,000)

Quote: ".In the face of a radically changed panorama, the analyses and predictions should focus on the possibilities of governability by a regime that was legitimately born by a great popular demand. In this context, the extreme psychosis that predominates in the State Department and the opinions that are inscribed in the religion of rightist ideology are just too much. Instead, we should be focusing on the three basic challenges facing the future Bolivian president: energy policy, foreign relations, and the complex relationship with [the province of] Santa Cruz de la Sierra ...

"With regard to foreign policy, the alliance with the government of Venezuela, the elections in Peru, and the institutional destiny of Ecuador will be the crux that will outline the hard and firm attitude of the U.S., which, thanks to the fact that we no longer live in the era of the Cold War, shouldn't turn out like the experience of Salvador Allende.

"Finally. the separatist or autonomist tendency in regards to the province of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, in extreme moments, will create a complex challenge for this untested administration; it should be aware of the distance that exists between the government and the constant insurgency."

JEWELL